**January 2012 Notes

Congo Action Now**

 **January 22nd, 2012**

Facilitator: Pat Aron

Minutes: Samba Halkose

Present: Pat Aron, Suzanne Bas-Davis, Samba Halkose, Kelley Ready, David
Amisi.

Congo Action Now met on January 22nd, 2012. The meeting began with check-ins. We missed the CANers who couldn’t make it. The group continued with discussion of the Massachusetts Congo Conflict Minerals bill as well as addressing other topics.

Samba talked about the recent election in the DRC saying that the election was not democratic. Many people are alleging fraud by the President-elect Joseph Kabila against Etienne Tshisekedi. Yesterday there were widespread marches to protest the election results. Both candidates have had inauguration ceremonies so nobody knows what will happen next. The situation in the DRC is not good.

Pat talked about follow-up items from the December meeting regarding what people will be doing. We had agreed to contact specific groups to ask for their help with the bill. Pat drafted a letter for us to send to groups in Massachusetts. Kelley has written to Brandeis STAND to ask for their assistance.

Pat reported on the meeting she and Laurie had to brief Rep. Khan on the situation
  in the DRC. They discussed the process for the hearing on the bill. We should
  get as many people to testify as possible – each person will have three
  minutes. She suggested that we group people into panels. Rep. Walsh can notify
  the bill’s co-sponsors when the hearing is scheduled and ask them to testify.
  Rep. Khan will testify - she asked that we prepare a template for testimony.
  Pat gave her a fact sheet on the bill that she had prepared.

Pat discussed the current status of the bill. House Rules reported it out and it is
  now before Senate Ethics and Rules. Once the Senate committee reports it out,
  it will go to the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory
  Oversight where a public hearing will be scheduled. Pat and Laurie met briefly
  with Rep. Walsh’s aide about the committee status. Pat and Laurie then talked
  with aides to Sen. Chang-Diaz and Sen. Pettrucelli to ask the senators to speak
  with the Senate Ethics chair (Sen. Berry) about moving out the bill.

Laurie, Kelley, and Pat will schedule a meeting with Rep. Walsh and his aide to discuss
  needed steps – possibility of a Lobby Day, notifying co-sponsors when the
  hearing is scheduled, and co-sponsor contact with Sen. Brown about federal
  regulations. Once the bill is released to the Joint Committee, Suzanne, Kelley,
  and Pat will meet with committee members. After getting feedback from other
  organizations, we will decide if scheduling a Lobby Day at the State House
  would be useful. If so, Kelley, Suzanne, and Pat will organize the event.
  Laurie can schedule a room. We’ll provide training on the situation in the DRC
  and may show a film as well as providing talking points for meetings with
  legislators. Pat will revise the email to organizations and will send an email
  to the full CAN list. After sending the email, we’ll follow-up with calls or
  emails.

We are referring people to the CAN website for actions to take on the state bill
and federal regulations. Coleen and Pat are working on changes – have added a
  section with sample emails/letters. People are also continuing to reach out to
  organizations asking them to sign on as supporters of the bill. We will each
  contact the organizations we signed up as supporters to ask of their interest
  in a Lobby Day as well as contacting legislators and participating in a public
  hearing.

Pat discussed the meeting that will be scheduled with Sen. Scott Brown’s Boston office. Global Witness has asked us to meet with his staff here (they have met with D.C.
  staff) to ask him to urge the SEC to issue Dodd-Frank regulations without
  delay. He had signed a letter asking for further study of the effects on small
  business. Joan Ecklein and Pat will attend the meeting and anyone else who
  wants to attend is welcome. Everybody is asked to send an email to the
  senator’s D.C. office and to call his Bostonoffice.

We have put the requests on hold for presentations at UMass/Boston and
Boston College pending scheduling of the public hearing on the bill. On March 29 at 6:00 p.m., we have agreed to present to a class at the Simmons School of Social Work. Pat will present again this year – not clear if Kelley can go so may need a co-presenter.

Casey has sent us an email (from Namibia) with information on the CAN
Twitter account. Pat will ask Coleen if she can check it and our Facebook
account. There was an article in the recent WILPF newsletter about DRC WILPF in
Kinshasa and an article on CAN. Pat will send copies.

The next meeting of CAN will be on Sunday, February 26, 2012 at 2:30.at Pat’s house
in Jamaica Plain.

**Agreements:**

Pat will revise the email to organizations and will send email to CAN list about
  involvement in lobbying for bill.

Everyone will send emails to their supporting organizations asking for feedback on Lobby Day and other activities – will follow up if don’t get response.

Everyone will send email to Sen. Brown’s D.C. office and call his Boston office to urge him to support prompt issuing of Dodd-Frank regulations.

Pat will prepare a template for legislators’ testimony.

Pat will present at Simmons School of Social Work – need volunteer to be
co-presenter.

Pat will send copies of Peace and Freedom articles on DRC WILPF and CAN.

Pat will ask Coleen if she can monitor the CAN Facebook and Twitter
accounts.

**Agreements from Prior Meetings:**

* We will all get copies signed of the letter asking legislators to support the
bill.
* Pat will write up talking points for people to use in meeting with legislators.
* Kelley will contact the African Council of MA about supporting the MA bill and will contact Mireille T. about the Boston Pan-African Forum.
* Kelley, Antonieta, and Pat will continue to follow-up with organizations to ask them
to sign on as supporters of the bill

 **Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom**